844 tier,[35] spells the Boruca name as *tsú-krá*. Both writers identify the plant as *Cuphea utriculosa* Koehne. The third composite of the bath is the bark of a tree growing along the Diquis River, which tree is called *sotacaballo* in Spanish (*Pithecolobium latifolium* [L.] Benth.). It is supposed to give luck and strength, because of its hard wood, to the child. The baby is then
301 given a bracelet, and, frequently a necklace,
751 which are made of tiger and caiman teeth and black and red and black seeds called *neno* or *nene* in Spanish, the black come from the male tree, and the red and black from the female. Pittier reports a similar seed used, but does not give its name, merely claiming that it comes from a small tree (*palo*). In addition, he adds, that the metacarpus of the wood rat and the second joint of the leg of the beetle or a member of the *Coleoptera* family, and the skulls of guatusas, a member of the rodent family, were used on the bracelet, strung on cotton thread, and wrapped three times around the arm. He states that this was to plant virtue in the child's heart.[36] Today, none of these last-
● [178] mentioned items are seen. Even the teeth, which are used at present, and are supposed to bring strength to the child, are often replaced by coins.

846 The mother is bathed for three successive days with a liquid made from boiling the leaves of the *guayabo* tree (see p. 6), and the leaves of the *kuet* or *sotacaballo* to strengthen her. In addition to this, she does not drink milk or coffee, nor does she eat pork, nor wet her hands, nor touch food in the kitchen for fifteen days. She does not resume relations with her husband for forty days. However, at least four times a day, she drinks a brew made from the root of *kuikſ·as* or *cordoncillo* (see p. 11) This is taken to stop the lochia. The mother is up after two days, at the most, but does not resume regular work for eight days.

863 When the baby is between nine and ten months old, he is weaned, and fed atol made of rice and of corn.

831 **Puberty.** There is no evidence of puberty
841 ceremonies. When girls begin to menstruate, which occurs between twelve and fifteen years, they are given *kuikſ·as* to drink so that they will not grow too long.

[35] Pittier, 1908, p. 162.

[p. 21-A]

841 they will not flow for long. The women say that only "stupid *ladinas*" flow for days and days. It is said, the *kɥikʃas* stops the period usually within three days. Four days are considered too long a time. A cloth is used to catch the flow, and some women say that formerly *mastate* (see p. 18) was used. Some women also say that, at present, nothing is used, and the blood is allowed to drip down the legs. The only tabu on women during this period is that they cannot participate at a *fiesta*, nor can they serve chicha or food to the men. The menstruating women can watch the gaiety, but must stay apart.

868 **Education.** Both sexes as children help in the fields, and the girls assist in the kitchen from a very early age. They also learn to make thread, but very few show interest in weaving. The boys make string bags, rope, and hammocks, and sometimes learn to carve gourds.

648 872 The *Boruca* children are sent to the local school which is run by the Costa Rican Government. The school masters, two in number, are from the central plateau, and until recently, little or no interest was taken in their job. They often were young men who were forced economically to take a post in an outlying Indian group, and who resented the fact, living only for their vacation and the day they might have sufficient friends of influence to permit their transfer to the capital. As a consequence, they frequently lived with Indian girls, and occasionally produced children whom they never bothered to support. The present inspector of the Indian schools and the actual Government, however, are doing their best to change much of this. The Boruca language is being encouraged and taught along with Spanish. A large blank notebook is being filled with the help of the older generation, and an attempt is under way to gather legends. One thing is certain, the younger generation is now obliged to study their own language. This was unheard of a few years ago.

585 178 **Marriage.** There is no particular ceremony in connection with marriage amongst the *Boruca*. The few customs that did exist are slowly disappearing.

* Pittier, 1888, p. 93.

[p. 21-B]

000
58 slowly disappearing. In some families, the
178 parents of the girl still arrange the match. There are, however, no exchange of presents, nor any similar ceremony, only mutual agreement. In the majority of cases, the young people decide for themselves with whom they want to live. Whether the match is pre-
583 arranged or not, a system of trial-marriage is
591 always customary. The young man moves into the house of the girl. He helps her family with work in the fields or hunting, and he lives with the girl. There is no sort of ceremony.. When the couple feel contented with one another, and ready for the responsibility of their own household, they build themselves a house and leave the parental one. Nowadays,
585 when the priest appears on his bi-yearly visit, the couple frequently marries in the church, and it is quite a sight to see long-married couples with children, and who have suddenly decided to have a formal marriage ceremony, line up before the church door to be "married." On these occasions, a "marriage shawl" is sometimes used. This is a substitute for the
[177] colonial Spanish-American custom whereby the priest in Roman Catholic marriages places a gold chain over the couple. The shawl is handwoven with a white background and a few purple and red lines. The red lines are shorter and border the ends. They are woven in a diamond-shaped pattern. The present shawl is about fifty years old, and is badly eaten by moths and bugs. It is so seldom used that it will probably be permitted to fall into decay without being replaced.

837 The tribe itself is not concerned with "morality" in the western meaning. Both men and women often have a lover in addition to their
[184] spouse. Unlike the neighboring *Cavagra*, who have remained more isolated from white influence and are often blindly jealous of their women, the *Boruca* pay little attention to sexual wanderings. A man gives his love food,
[848 and nowadays, occasionally money. A woman takes her illegitimate child home to her hus-
849] band's house. The cases of illegitimate children are interesting in that a woman apparently has a child only when she wants one
586 (see p. 26). The writer could find no case of divorce in Boruca, although she was told that

241 462 [178] Women formerly felled trees and did as much field labor as the men. Today, however, women do not clear the forest although they do cut the weeds and grass. On both sides of the range, men and women work in the fields and harvest crops.

262 241 **Cultivated Crops.** The basic diet of these peoples consists of tubers, *pejibaye*, cacao, bananas,[61] and plantains.

244 The importance of tubers is easily understood when one takes into account the following advantages: they can be grown in a wide range of soils; propagate without trouble; have few serious pests; will tolerate heavy rainfall; and are available throughout the year. The [137] principal root crops are yucas (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) including the white, yellow, reddish, and purple varieties;[62] *tiquisqui* or *malanga* (*Xanthosoma violaceum* Schott); white and yellow *ñame* (*Dioscorea* spp.) and purple and white *ñampi* (*Dioscorea trifida* L.).

245 Cacao, bananas, and plantains are also year-round products which, once planted, do not need constant attention.

245 262 In fact, most of these basic foodstuffs are in production continually, assuring a permanent source of food. The *pejibaye* usually bears twice a year and requires from two to seven years of growth before producing its first crop. The value of its fruit as an element of diet, however, cannot be underestimated.[63] [137] There are several kinds of *pejibayes*—some red and some yellow, both with and without seeds.[64] They have been a traditional item of diet for the Talamancans since pre-Columbian times when they appear to have been cultivated extensively.[65] They are present at every ancient and modern indigenous site, but are not found wild in the forest.

262 241 This basic diet is supplemented with several varieties of beans among which are the *kubas*

[137] [177] [61] The banana is not an indigenous American foodstuff. It was brought to this continent at the time of the Spanish conquest by Friar Tomás de Berlanga.

[62] These names apply chiefly to the plant without the tuber. The distinguishing characteristics are: white yuca has many and large leaves and a straight trunk; yellow yuca has a yellow trunk and tuber; purple yuca has purple leaves but the root is white; red yuca has red leaves and white tubers.

[63] For food value of this fruit, *see* Appendix I.

[64] The Boruca are the only Costa Rican people who

224 262 this method of hunting that only cold food may be eaten before the hunt as hot food brings bad luck.

226 **Fishing.** The most common method of fishing is with the bow and barbed or straight palm-wood arrow (fig. 3, *b*).[1/2] Small fish are sometimes killed by the blow of a machete and hooks are occasionally used. Grasshoppers [825] are the favorite bait. These are caught and [227] kept in a gourd in which air holes have been [415] bored and a corncob is used as a stopper or cap until ready for use. Grasshoppers can live five days in such a container. Conical casting nets, similar to those used by the Guaymí of Panama, are also employed. On the Pacific side, amongst the Bribri, sometimes the stream is dammed and a wooden fish trap is used.

Next to the bow and arrow, however, the most popular manner of fishing is with poisons. [278] The two most frequently used are obtained [824] from a tree (*Phyllantus* sp. Pittieri) and from a vine (*Serjania* sp.).[73] The tree poison blinds and kills all fish, and is so strong that the day after a person has handled it, it is common for his face to remain swollen and to hurt. When this poison is used, the river is dammed with tree trunks downstream. Around four o'clock in the morning thirty or so men begin to [462] scrape or shred pieces of the *Phyllantus* into [857] the water. Non-pregnant women and children gather downstream to collect the fish in baskets (*bavas*). The organizer of this event receives one or two fish from each participant, the number depending on the total amount caught, and can keep all that he himself [178] catches. Today, permission has to be obtained [625] from the police agent in Talamanca and the organizer has to give him a share.

The vine colors the water green but only stuns the fish. It is used in small creeks and not large rivers. Only two men are needed to fish in this way. The vine, leaves, and stem are beaten into small pieces with a stick and then are thrown into the dammed waterway. [278] A third fish poison is sometimes prepared from [824] a tuber which resembles the *ñame*. It is called *wiwəkri* in Bribri and is mashed and thrown into the water.

252 **Food Preparation.** On the whole, food is

[73] For the indigenous names see Plant List in Appendix.

1/2 [see category 116 - END PLATE 2 - ANALYST.]

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
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342 pointed roof (fig. 5). Actually, the dwelling is designed to shed heavy rainfall easily and to house four separate families (*see* Marriage).

[824] The roof palm (*see* Cultivated Crops) is called *bugə* in Cabécar and *ukó* in Bribri. The leaves are suspended on canes to dry before use on the building (fig. 6, *a–b*). The one door and the low walls are made of wooden rods and occasionally of wild cane tied together with vines. There is usually a palm-leaf shed projecting from the single doorway which protects the entrance from the heavy rains. Gabb gives an excellent description of the construction of such a dwelling which we repeat below as the technique of house making has not changed. Before Gabb, however, it is well to note that he speaks in particular of the Bribri house, stating that the Cabécar dwelling formerly was like this but today is similar to a "mere shed." The writer observed that both peoples constructed the large circular house in 1956, but that this style of

[184] Cabécar housing was more common in the Chirripó region than in the upper Coen. According to Gabb, these houses are:

> . . . usually circular, from thirty to fifty feet in diameter, and about the same in height. They are composed of long poles, reaching from the ground to the apex. These rest on a ring of withes or vines, tied in bundles, eight or ten inches thick, and resting on a series of upright crotched posts, set in the ground in a circle about a third smaller than the outer circumference of the house. Above this ring, if the house is large, are one or two more, according to its size, not resting on posts, but tied to the sloping poles. The whole is thickly thatched with palm leaves, and finished at the apex by an old earthen jar to stop the leaks. . . .[76]

[178] This type of house is being slowly replaced by a rectangular structure open at both ends.

In the Talamanca Plain, where only the Bribri or Cabécares married to Bribri live, a raised rectangular house made of the bark of

[824] *bira*, the Bribri name for the black stilt palm (*Socratea* sp. or species of similar growth habit), but roofed with the leaves of *bugə*, forms a dwelling ideal for the hot, wet climate

[177] of the Caribbean lowlands and is, undoubtedly, the result of foreign influence (fig. 7, *d*). It should be noted that here in the plain there

[76] Gabb, 1875, p. 514.

302 (painted) below the eyes and on the cheeks. . . ." [84] In the 20th century, there is no trace [178] of paint in the Caribbean region. On the [177] Pacific side, a few women copy non-Indians by putting *achiote* on their cheeks in place of rouge and using lipstick which they buy. [751] Cocoa butter is applied occasionally as a protection against the sun.

292 In upper Talamanca and upper Chirripó on festive occasions, during short periods of group [474] work in building a house, clearing forests, hauling logs for a clan grave, etc., men still wear [231] headdresses made of white feathers and of macaw and eagle feathers (*see* Reunions).

301 Formerly the *usegLa* (*see* Social Organization) wore necklaces of jaguar teeth. Today, [825] boys use these necklaces "to get them used to hunting and take away fear of the jaguar." Beads made from sea shells are mixed with these teeth (fig. 12, *c*). The long all-shell [178] strings, called *chaquira* and mentioned in Spanish reports,[85] are not known now. Chil- [777] dren have a "good luck" necklace called *sewivu* in Cabécar. This is made from the bark [824] of a tree called *kuri* which is claimed to be immune to disease and to propagate of its own [237] accord. Sea shells, seeds (occasionally carved), bones, and jaguar, monkey, or alligator teeth are strung on it (*see* Manufacture). When financially possible, women wear strands of [439] red beads which are bought in trading posts or commissaries. There are no earrings in the remote sections.

301 On the Pacific side, the "good luck" neck- 184 laces of children have fewer or no teeth and [777] often a Roman Catholic charm or cross is worn. Here women wear earrings and single [439] strands of glass beads bought from traveling merchants.

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481 roots. They are also adept at crossing swift boulder-filled rivers on foot. Their only aid when traveling is a long staff which they cut for this purpose before undertaking a journey.

[84] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, ftn. 10, p. 338.
[85] Fernández, 1882, vol. II, p. 152.

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later. Here it is necessary to note, however, that certain vestiges of traditional customs persist, at least among the Bribri of Cabagra. When a person has been dead and buried a year, he is exhumed and replaced in the same grave.

Official Participants in Death and Burial Rites. There is an elaborate group of officials connected with death and burial rites even today. Each division requires certain preparation by the individual taking part in the rites. In a sense, these participants can be classed as lay clergy. These "professionals," if so they can be called, are of utmost importance when one realizes that the dead are strictly tabu to the non-initiated. If, by any ill luck, a person should touch someone dead, a three-day purification ceremony is absolutely essential or misfortune will befall him. This is true of both slopes of the range.

The principal figure in these rituals is the medicine man, known in Bribri and Cabécar as the *jaʒá* (*see* The Medicine Man). Next in importance today is the Burier (*see* The Buriers) who handles and wraps the dead. Then follow the Singers (*see* The Singers) whose place is now generally taken by the medicine man as well as that of the Preparer of Feasts. A medicine man, particularly on the Pacific side, functions in all of these positions. Among the Cabécar, there is a minor group known as the *já*, and among the Bribri the *ʒarichɔk*, who need no special training but who prepare the things for the dead to take with them *without* touching the body.

The preparation and position of the medicine man is treated under religion because in addition to his curing abilities, he personifies the last remaining vestiges of former credences and priesthood.

The other officials in connection with death and burial have duties concerned solely with these operations. They do not seem to form part, as has been said by some, of the priesthood, but do have a decided social position because of their task.

The Buriers. They are known as *ókub* or *ókuṃ* in Bribri and *keri* in Cabécar. They are the only people, aside from the medicine man who is all important, who can touch the dead. They must also light the funeral fire. They are the only non-clergy who can touch a buzzard or a possum.

765 of an individual a year or more after death. The best description of such an event is pre-
114 sented by Gabb who assisted at the bone burial
765 of the last famous "King of Talamanca,"
[643] Santiago. This has the historic value of an eyewitness report of a ceremony which today is impossible to duplicate, and forms an essential contribution to the cultural background of these people.[113]

765 Only in upper Talamanca and upper Chir-
[184] ripó is this type of funeral still practised, and
[652] at that secretly, because it is prohibited by the Costa Rican authorities. The dwelling of
[756] the medicine man takes the place of the "casa grande" or big house which was used for the purpose of ceremonials in connection with such burials. Here the bones are taken from the leaf bundle and wrapped in *mastate* by the Burier. Then this is placed on a long bench
533 beside the doorway. The medicine man sings,
765 mentioning *sibu* and recounting the life of the deceased and all his actions, for example: how he planted, worked, what he did, and where he went. The song also gives the reason for his death. If the dead was female, the song
[535] recounts her doings. A feast follows and sometimes a dance.[114] To the beat of drums (*see*
765 Musical Instruments) and rattles, the people and the medicine man accompany the Buriers
[764] who carry the bone bundle to the graveyard. Generally, this is situated on a ridge or near the headwaters of a stream. Here are located the clan graves known as *pų*. These are deep, round holes lined with four planks of an ex-
[824] tremely hard wood (*Xanthoxylum* sp. called *surí* in Cabécar) which does not rot easily. The Bribri line the bottom with stones, but the Cabécar do not bother to do this. The Bribri are more particular than the Cabécar in that the bones should not in any way touch the earth. An additional plank is inclined over the top as further protection. Each clan has
[614] its own grave which is used until it is full.
[178] Today, however, clans that are allowed to inter-marry are buried in the same shaft. The Burier removes the planks of the grave and puts the bone package in with his hands while the medicine man sings, explaining that now the soul has gone and will never return. After-
[279] wards, he arranges the planks as before. Chicha

[113] Gabb, 1875, pp. 500-503.
[114] Pittier, 1938.

601 tachiwa — Mo Fa Fa
Fa Fa Fa
So So
So Da
Da So
Da Da

mikuwa — Fa Mo Mo
Mo Mo Mo

423 **Land Tenure.** We have already noted that villages in the European sense are foreign to the Talamancans. The clan has a given area [614] for the use of their members. This involves a [241] river or creek (*see* Villages). The individual family plants in a different spot yearly within this territory (*see* Farming and Cultivated Foods). The Cabécares of the Pacific slope have begun to recognize land property. In [351] Ujarrás, fences are seen around vegetable and house gardens. The Bribri, however, have only demonstrated such tendencies in the vicinity of the school.

428 **Property.** The property understood as individual and which can be handed down at death [422] [423] pertains to personal effects and the house. When a man dies his property goes to his brothers and sisters. If he has a mother they go to his mother. When she dies they go to whomever she wants to leave them, a son, [178] daughter, etc. Today, however, everything [429] goes to the children—not to the wife. The wife remains as guardian for the children. When a man dies without leaving an adult son, his [736] head wife receives everything, but she is obligated to take care of the other wives until they remarry. The eldest son receives the greater portion, but all children have a share.

443 **Trade.** Markets were and are unknown among the Talamancan peoples. Trade was accomplished by itinerant groups or in areas 438 set aside for this purpose. Products of the sea, [436] such as salt and *chaquira*, shell beads which served as a medium of exchange, were important items in pre-Columbian times. Also in demand were gold, wild pigs, slaves, and cotton cloth.[140]

Certain vestiges of this custom remain. In fact, in the remote areas, and even in Salitre [437] and Ujarrás, articles are often traded and

[140] *See*, e.g., Fernández, 1886, vol. V.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1
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car

(7) The Multiplication of Human Beings[180]

(*Cabécar*)

* 539 There was a number of brothers who had only one sister. She fed them on fish alone. One day they asked her where she caught so many. She answered that their brother-in-law brought them.

The eldest brother wondered who could be his brother-in-law and decided not to leave the house so he could see for himself. Towards evening, he noticed a large jaguar approach his sister's bed. The brother, thinking it was dangerous, wounded the animal with an arrow.

The jaguar roared horribly and rushed out of the house to a lagoon where he jumped in. The sister, seeing her lover in such a condition, abandoned her brothers and followed the jaguar.

The youngest brother mourned the absence of his sister and went to the lagoon to try to reach her. He found, however, that the lagoon had disappeared and there was a road in its stead. He walked and walked along this and finally arrived at a house where his sister was living. He begged her to return home but she refused.

His brother-in-law, the large jaguar, told his wife that he would give the young brother a parrot but that he should leave them in peace. The man took the bird and went home. Once in his own house, the parrot performed all the tasks the sister had done such as cooking, cleaning, and running the house.

serike

(*Cabécar*)

* 539 776 821 823 *serike* is the son of thunder. His mother left him to live with his uncle by marriage, *tio politico*, and had another son called *cubura*. *serike* lives where the sun sets. He really is five men in one. When the evil spirit, *bák namá*, who dwells in the rivers, gets ready to go on the rampage and cause disaster and death by drowning, the water birds *trak* (*Ceryle Torquata* or the ringed kingfisher) and *tangré* (the Brazilian cormorant *Phalacrocorax b. grasili-*

[825]

[178]

[180] *See* Linguistic Texts: *sajerso* (people) *jaar* (increase). This is a vestige of a lengthy theological tale, most of which has been forgotten today.

dance which was performed in a circle by men and women with one person singing but the whole group joining in the chorus. The song recounted the experiences during a hunt.

There are various dances held in connection with death and burial but they are seldom seen today outside of upper Talamanca.

Pittier[208] mentions a bone dance performed at the time of secondary burial by men if the deceased was an adult and by women if a child. The bone dance witnessed by the writer was carried out by a line of women and one of men. The person taking the place of the Singer (*see* Death) chanted the life history of the departed, and kept time with a gourd rattle. His four assistants in the line of men had drums under their arms which they beat as they danced.

A different bone dance which is a remnant of a war dance with trophy heads is occasionally performed when the medicine man is feeling particularly sure of himself and wants to celebrate. Men and women form a circle with interlocked arms. It is said that skulls were once balanced on the arms. Today, nothing is placed there. The men sing and the women join in the chorus singing *ékéké* meaning "good" or "well."

Songs. All sacred songs are basically Cabécar even though they may be sung in Bribri. The Medicine Man and sometimes the Burier sing these songs which are usually in ancient Cabécar and are not understood by the masses.

Lay songs are common to the Bribri and very rare among the Cabécar. The Bribri delight in inventing songs to fit the occasion. Both men and women like to sing and do so on the slightest provocation when working, bathing, washing, or minding the baby. The addition of words only for their sound is characteristic. Likewise, many Térraba words are found in Bribri songs, the meaning of which is unknown to the singer. In fact, the sung language permits all sorts of liberties as well as having a certain vocabulary of its own.

western Panama. The traditional home of the Bribri is in northwest Panama. *See* Stone, 1952, p. 252.

[208] Segarra y Julia, 1907, pp. 594–95.

[209] Pittier, 1938, pp. 25–26.